



# Virginia Regulatory Town Hall Agency User Manual

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## Part 2: Virginia Regulatory Town Hall

### **Section 1: Essential information**

This section covers the following topics in the order listed:

- Basic information about the Town Hall, including:
  - Logging on to the site as an agency user,
  - How to find your agency's information, and
  - When email notification is sent by the Town Hall
- Why and how to sign up Town Hall registered users

# Basic information about the Town Hall

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Jump down to

- [The Town Hall in a nutshell](#)
- [Logging on as an agency user](#)
- [Finding your agency's regulatory information](#)
- [When email notification is sent to an agency](#)
- [When email notification is sent to public registered users](#)

## The Town Hall in a nutshell

The Virginia Regulatory Town Hall is the first comprehensive rulemaking website in the nation and has received numerous national and state awards. The website is managed by the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget (DPB).

The Town Hall allows state agencies to (1) submit and manage their regulatory information on-line, (2) see exactly where a regulatory package is in the review process, (3) enjoy a reduced workload because the Town Hall takes care of the job of notifying members of the public (who have signed up as Town Hall registered users and indicated an interest in that agency) about an agency's regulatory activities, including meetings and public hearings, and provides links to the agency's regulatory documents.

## Logging on as an agency user

In order to log onto the site as a secure user use the address: [townhall.virginia.gov/logon.cfm](http://townhall.virginia.gov/logon.cfm), and then type in your User ID and password.

It is important to maintain the confidentiality of your password. While an agency regulatory coordinator may authorize others in the agency to assist with making changes, the coordinator is responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of any changes made.

**Logging off.** If you have been logged on the Town Hall for about an hour without any activity, the Town Hall will automatically log you off. This will reduce the chance that an unauthorized user modifies agency data while you are away from your desk. It is good practice to always manually log yourself off the site by clicking on "Log off" on the blue menu bar.

**Changing passwords.** It is recommended that you change your password regularly (once every three months) in order to help ensure the integrity of agency data on the Town Hall. You may change your password by clicking on the link to "Change Password" on the first page you encounter after logging on to the Town Hall as a secure user.

*Note:* Passwords should contain at least one non-alphanumeric character such as an asterisk, a tilde, or some other character. This makes the password **much** harder to guess.

## Finding your agency's regulatory information

The Town Hall is organized to reflect the structure of the Virginia Administrative Code (VAC), the Virginia state government organizational structure, and the regulatory development process. If you are familiar with regulations in Virginia, you will find that the Town Hall closely mirrors the organizational structures that are already in place.

Once logged on to the Town Hall as a secure user, you can locate information on your agency's regulations as follows:

**Regulatory actions in progress.** On the blue menu bar, use the "Agency Functions" dropdown

list and click on "Current Actions." Under the **Current Actions** page, you will see any of your agency's regulatory actions currently in progress, listed under each Board. You will see the regulation affected, the name of the action, the latest stage of the action, and where that stage is in the regulatory process. Links are provided so that you can explore these regulations, actions, and stages and all the accompanying materials. Here you will find background documents explaining the changes that an agency is implementing as well as the complete text of the proposed changes. If you are logged on as the agency regulatory coordinator, you will have the option of adding a new stage for the chapter or editing an existing stage.

**Agency boards.** On the blue menu bar, use the "Agency Functions" dropdown list and click on "Agency Boards." Under the **Boards** page, you will see a list of all your agency's boards. Click on the "?" symbol next to a board to find out more information about that board which you may modify.

**Agency regulations.** On the blue menu bar, use the "Agency Functions" dropdown list and click on "Agency Boards." Under the **Boards** page, you will see a list of all your agency's boards. By clicking on the link to any of these boards, you can view all the regulations listed under each chapter. Clicking on one of these chapters will allow you to display additional information about that chapter (**Chapter Information** page). Near the bottom of that page, you will see a list of all regulatory actions in progress in connection to that regulation. At the bottom of the page, you will see periodic review information.

**Agency meetings.** The Town Hall Calendar contains information on all public hearings and meetings that address regulations. On the blue menu bar, look for "Meetings" and click on either "Future" or "Past Meeting Minutes." To refine your search to meetings scheduled for a particular board, use the drop-down list to select a board and press "Go." To receive additional information about a meeting included on the calendar, just click on the meeting and a page containing more detailed information about the meeting will be displayed.

**Guidance documents.** On the blue menu bar, use the "Agency Functions" dropdown list and click on "Guidance Documents" to see a list of all guidance documents—those providing information or guidance of general applicability to staff or public—that have been uploaded on the Town Hall.

**Agency mailing list.** On the blue menu bar, use the "Agency Functions" dropdown list and click on "Agency Mailing List" to find out more about Town Hall users who have signed up on your notification list. You may also send e-mail to these individuals, as well as download user information associated with any board or regulations of your agency.

### When email notification is sent to an agency

The Town Hall will automatically send a regulatory coordinator an e-mail notification whenever there is any action taken on a regulatory action, e.g., when the OAG has uploaded its letter of assurance on the Town Hall, when DPB has completed its review, when the Cabinet Secretary has completed its review, and when the Governor has completed his review.

### When email notification is sent to public registered users

If a member of the public signs up on the Town Hall as a registered user, he will have the option to receive customized e-mail notification relating to any agency, board, or chapter in which he is interested. Depending on the type of notification specified, the Town Hall will send e-mail notification whenever the following events occur:

- When a regulatory stage, e.g., NOIRA, proposed stage, final stage, fast-track regulation, emergency regulation, is about to be published in the Virginia Register.
- When an agency schedules a meeting.
- When a significant change is made to an existing regulatory stage, e.g., it is suspended or withdrawn.

- Regarding the following changes to a meeting, you can choose whether or not the Town Hall sends out email notification: (1) a change in meeting date or time, (2) a change in meeting location, and (3) the posting of minutes.
- A meeting is cancelled.
- When a petition for rulemaking is posted on the Town Hall.
- When the result of a petition for rulemaking is posted on the Town Hall.
- When a final regulation is suspended.
- When a general notice is submitted to the Registrar.

Registered users receive a maximum of two e-mails a day, however, on average will receive about two e-mails a week.

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# Why and how to sign up Town Hall registered users

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Jump down to

- [What is a Town Hall registered user?](#)
- [The benefits of signing up Town Hall registered users](#)
- [How to sign up Town Hall registered users](#)

## What is a Town Hall registered user?

A Town Hall registered user is an individual who (1) for no charge may submit online public comments to the Town Hall, as well as receive customized email notification of regulatory actions and meetings, and (2) has provided minimal identifying information on the Town Hall website (by clicking on the "Fast & easy sign-up" link on the blue menu bar of the Town Hall).

## The benefits of signing up Town Hall registered users

### (1) Less work and fewer costs for your agency

Most agencies maintain a list of contact information for individuals who have expressed an interest in their agency's regulations. (Often this information is referred to as an agency's PPG list.) Normally, agencies must notify all individuals on their contact/PPG list of regulatory events, e.g., meetings about regulations or the publication of a proposed regulation in the Register of Regulations.

By registering these individuals (and any other interested persons) as registered users on the Town Hall, the agency (in many cases, you) will no longer have to spend the time to send out costly mailings to these individuals. Instead, the Town Hall will take care of this notification, as well as provide these individuals with links to most regulatory documents that are filed with the Registrar.

Once again, the more people that you sign up on the Town Hall to receive regulatory information relating to your agency, the fewer people your agency will have to notify by other means.

### (2) Significantly enhanced communication between your agency and the individuals you regulate and other interested persons

The Town Hall maintains a mailing list for each agency. The agency mailing list consists of Town Hall registered users who have signed up to receive information in connection to any board or regulations of your agency.

You may use this feature to send e-mail to individuals on your mailing list. For example, You may wish to use this feature when you are sending out a summary of public comments and the agency's response to these comments, as well as when implementation questions arise so you may explain how an issue will be handled.

You may also view and download information related to your agency mailing list.

### (3) Increased goodwill from your regulated community and other interested persons because you will be giving them access to highly customized information and an easy way to submit public comments (that regular public users of the site do not have):

*E-mail notification service.* Registered users may sign up to receive e-mail notification about regulatory actions and meetings related to any agencies, boards, and regulations in which they

are interested.

*Public comment forums.* Registered users may submit comments in on-line public comment forums.

*My Town Hall.* Allows registered users to create a customized list of meetings and regulatory actions that they wish to track

### **How to sign up Town Hall registered users**

**How to sign up a person as a registered user on the Town Hall** (for agency users)

[PDF](#)

[Word](#)

**How do you sign up as a registered user on the Town Hall?** (for the public)

[PDF](#)

[Word](#)

**Virginia Regulatory Town Hall Brochure**

[PDF](#)

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# How to sign up a member of the public as a registered user on the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall

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- ❑ Go to [www.townhall.virginia.gov](https://www.townhall.virginia.gov).
- ❑ Click on “Enter Town Hall.”
- ❑ At the bottom of the blue menu bar on the left, click on “Fast & easy sign-up.”
- ❑ You will see a screen like this one:

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window titled "Register For Town Hall Services - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar displays "https://www.townhall.virginia.gov/Notification/register.cfm". The page content includes a left-hand navigation menu with links such as "Find a regulation by", "Regulatory changes", "Meetings", and "Registered users". The main content area is titled "User Information" and contains a registration form. The form includes fields for "E-mail address\*", "Re-type e-mail address\*", "Enter password\*", "Confirm password\*", "First Name\*", "M.I.", "Last Name\*", "Suffix", "Title", and "Organization". A red error message states: "Your password must be at least 6 characters and is case sensitive." The browser's status bar at the bottom shows the time as 2:01 PM.

Register For Town Hall Services - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media Print

Address <https://www.townhall.virginia.gov/Notification/register.cfm> Go Links

false

Virginia Regulatory  
**Town Hall**

**Find a regulation by**

- Subject/Title
- Secretariat
- Agency
- Board
- Search form

**Regulatory changes**

- Now in progress
- Open for comment
- Required by VA law
- Requested by public

**Meetings**

- Future
- Past meeting minutes

**Registered users**

- Log on
- Fast & easy sign-up

☐ Hide Menu

## User Information

Virginia Town Hall services are free to all users. Registration allows you to submit online comments and receive notification of regulatory actions and meetings. For details about confidentiality of information submitted to the Town Hall, see the [Town Hall privacy policy](#).

Note: You must be at least 13 years old to register to use the Town Hall website.

Your email address will be your login name. \* indicates a required field.

E-mail address\* Re-type e-mail address\*

Enter password\* Confirm password\*

Your password must be at least 6 characters and is case sensitive.

First Name\* M.I. Last Name\* Suffix

Title

Organization

Done Internet

Start Web Site Policy Memos 2:01 PM

- ❑ Enter person's information on this page including a password of his choosing. For security purposes, advise person to change his password the first time he logs on to the Town Hall website. Click "Save" at the bottom of the screen.



- Next, you will be taken to a notifications options screen. It will look something like this:

**Modify Town Hall Services Options - Microsoft Internet Explorer**

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media Print View Source

## Notification Options

Please indicate below if you wish to receive e-mail notification about regulatory actions and meetings related to Virginia's regulations. Click **Save** at the bottom of this page to enter the Town Hall. Note: You may choose not to receive e-mail notification. You can change your preferences at any time.

**Choose your area(s) of interest:**  
Click on the box below to indicate your areas of interest, if any. Click on the ☐ to view all items in a category or the ☐ to collapse a list of items.

Select

- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Commerce and Trade
- ☒ Education
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Health and Human Resources
- ☐ Independent Agencies
- ☐ Natural Resources
- ☐ Public Safety
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Technology

Done Internet

- Click on the + sign to view all items under a category. Click on the – sign to collapse a list of items.
- Click on the appropriate boxes to indicate the agencies, boards, and/or particular regulations the person is interested in receiving email notification about. Note: The person does not have to choose anything here if he does not wish to receive email notifications or if he wishes to indicate his preferences on the website at a later time.



- ☐ Note whether the person wishes to receive information regarding meetings and/or regulatory actions related to the subject areas he has indicated.
- ☐ Note whether the person wishes the email to be in HTML or plain text format.
- ☐ Press Save button.

**Modify Town Hall Services Options - Microsoft Internet Explorer**

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

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☐ Finance

☒ Health and Human Resources

- ☐ Department for the Aging
- ☒ Department of Health Professions
  - ☒ Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (18 VAC 30)
  - ☒ Board of Dentistry (18 VAC 60)
  - ☒ Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers (18 VAC 65)
  - ☒ Board of Health Professions (18 VAC 75)
  - ☒ Board of Counseling (18 VAC 115)
  - ☒ Board of Medicine (18 VAC 85)
  - ☒ Board of Nursing (18 VAC 90)
  - ☒ Board of Nursing Home Administrators (18 VAC 95)
  - ☒ Board of Optometry (18 VAC 105)
  - ☒ Board of Pharmacy (18 VAC 110)
  - ☒ Board of Psychology (18 VAC 125)
  - ☒ Board of Social Work (18 VAC 140)
  - ☒ Board of Veterinary Medicine (18 VAC 150)
  - ☒ Department of Health Professions (18 VAC 76)
  - ☒ Board of Physical Therapy (18 VAC 112)
- ☐ Department of Rehabilitative Services

**I would like to receive e-mail about:**

☐ Meetings related to the subject areas I have indicated above

☐ Regulatory actions related to the subject areas I have indicated above

**I would like to receive my e-mail in the following format:**

☒ HTML (formatted messages that look like Web pages)

☐ Plain Text (choose this option if your e-mail program does not support HTML-enhanced e-mails)

Save Cancel

Done Internet

- ☐ The person is now signed up as a Town Hall registered user and will receive a confirmation email at the email address he provided.
- ☐ If the person wishes to edit his user information or notification preferences, he can do this any time by simply logging on to the Town Hall, and then clicking on 'Registration Options' on the blue menu bar.

# How to sign up as a registered user on the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall

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Register For Town Hall Services - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Search Favorites Media Print Mail

Address <https://www.townhall.virginia.gov/Notification/register.cfm> Go Links

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E-mail address\* Re-type e-mail address\*

Enter password\* Confirm password\*

Your password must be at least 6 characters and is case sensitive.

First Name\* M.I. Last Name\* Suffix

Title

Organization

Done

Start

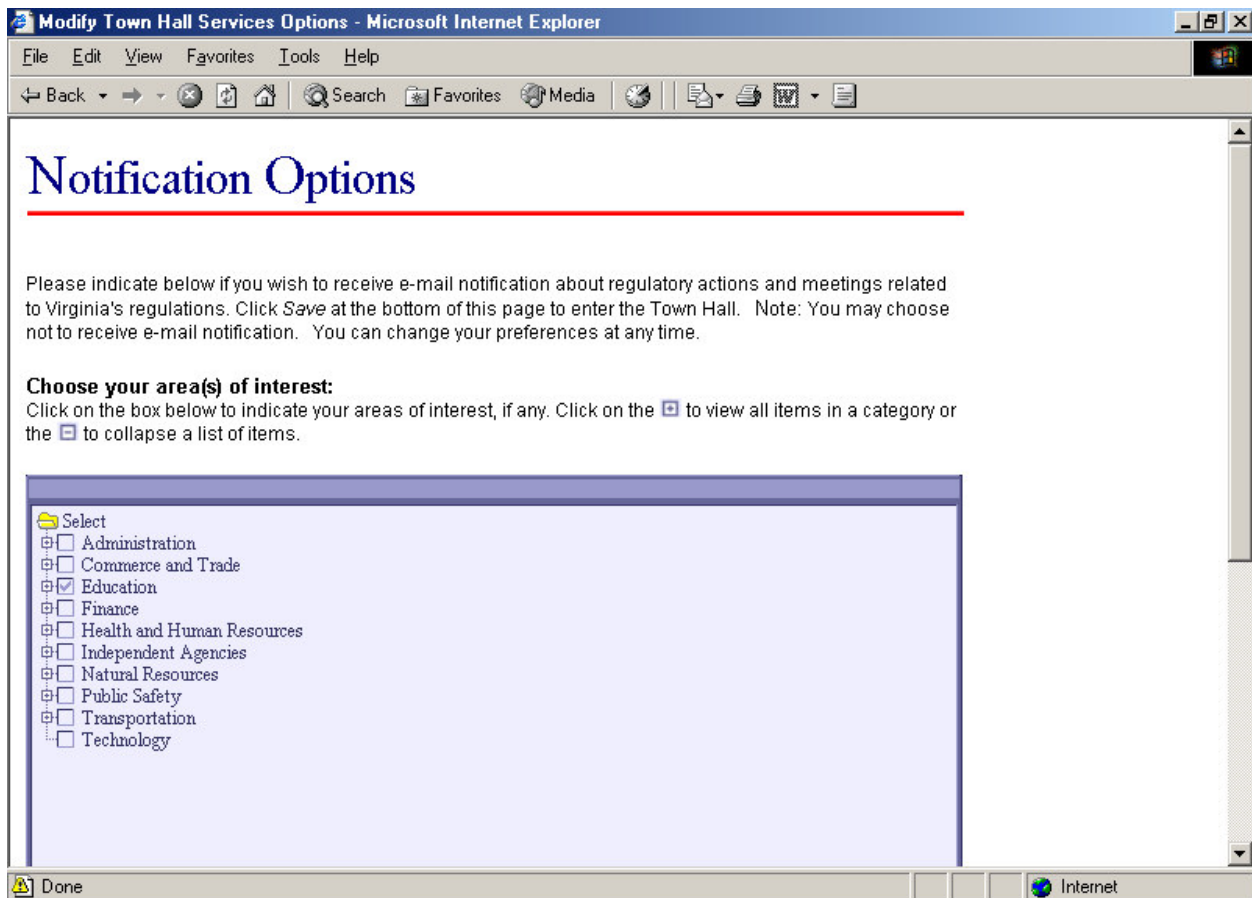
Web Site Policy Memos

2:01 PM

- ❑ Complete requested information.
- ❑ Click “Save” at the bottom of the screen.



- Next, you will be taken to a notifications options screen. It will look something like this:



- Click on the + sign to view all items under a category. Click on the – sign to collapse a list of items.
- Click on the appropriate boxes to indicate the agencies, boards, and/or particular regulations for which you would like to receive email notification. Note: You do not have to choose anything here if you do not wish to receive email notifications.



- ☐ Note whether you wish to receive information regarding meetings and/or regulatory actions related to the subject areas you have indicated.
- ☐ Note whether you wish the email to be in HTML or plain text format.
- ☐ Press Save button.

**Modify Town Hall Services Options - Microsoft Internet Explorer**

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Reload Search Favorites Media

☐ Finance

☒ Health and Human Resources

☐ Department for the Aging

☒ Department of Health Professions

☒ Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (18 VAC 30)

☒ Board of Dentistry (18 VAC 60)

☒ Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers (18 VAC 65)

☒ Board of Health Professions (18 VAC 75)

☒ Board of Counseling (18 VAC 115)

☒ Board of Medicine (18 VAC 85)

☒ Board of Nursing (18 VAC 90)

☒ Board of Nursing Home Administrators (18 VAC 95)

☒ Board of Optometry (18 VAC 105)

☒ Board of Pharmacy (18 VAC 110)

☒ Board of Psychology (18 VAC 125)

☒ Board of Social Work (18 VAC 140)

☒ Board of Veterinary Medicine (18 VAC 150)

☒ Department of Health Professions (18 VAC 76)

☒ Board of Physical Therapy (18 VAC 112)

☐ Department of Rehabilitative Services

**I would like to receive e-mail about:**

☐ Meetings related to the subject areas I have indicated above

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**I would like to receive my e-mail in the following format:**

☒ HTML (formatted messages that look like Web pages)

☐ Plain Text (choose this option if your e-mail program does not support HTML-enhanced e-mails)

Save Cancel

Done Internet

- ☐ You are now signed up as a Town Hall registered user.
- ☐ If at any time you wish to edit your user information or notification preferences, simply log on to the Town Hall, and then click on "Registration Options" on the blue menu bar.



## Praise for the Town Hall

The Town Hall is the first comprehensive rulemaking website in the nation and has been recognized in numerous national and state awards:

- American Association of Law Libraries  
Public Access to Government  
Information Award (2003)
- National Association of Secretaries of  
State ACR Colburn Innovation Award  
(2002)
- Center for Digital Government Best of  
Breed Award (2002)
- egov Trailblazer Award (2002)
- Governor's Technology Award (2002)
- Virginia Coalition for Open Government  
Freedom of Information Award (2001)

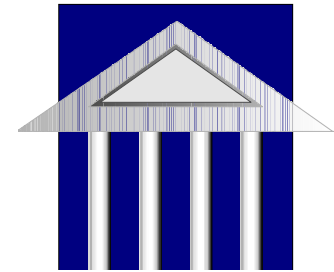
The Virginia Regulatory Town Hall is online government at its best -- streamlining day-to-day work of state agencies and plugging citizens into a sophisticated, interactive set-up for "7/24" public comment, customized user profiles and request-only e-mail alerts....it gives Web-active citizens all over the state a simple, fee-free way to get better informed, fully heard and actively involved.

-Forrest M. Landon, Executive Director  
Virginia Coalition for Open Government

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Virginia Regulatory Town Hall  
Virginia Department of Planning and Budget  
200 N. Ninth St., Room 418  
Richmond, VA 23219

## Virginia Regulatory Town Hall



[townhall.Virginia.gov](http://townhall.Virginia.gov)

“the mother of  
all government  
regulatory portals”

-Steven L. Clift  
Democracies Online Newswire

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## What is rulemaking?

Rulemaking is the process used by state agencies to make regulations. Regulations are promulgated to implement state law and have the force and effect of law. Regulations affect many areas of your life such as how fast you can drive, the qualifications of your doctor, pollution control requirements, standards for SOL testing, and many more.

Rulemaking ensures that *you* have an opportunity to participate and that all perspectives are considered in the development of a final regulation.

### ***The Town Hall gives you the tools to participate effectively.***

On the Town Hall web site, you can find out all about Virginia's regulations, submit on-line comments, and even sign up to receive customized e-mail notification. Best of all, Town Hall services are *free* to all users.

The Town Hall is your one-stop shop for rulemaking in Virginia.



## Popular features

***Regulatory docket.*** View all regulatory actions in progress.

***Access to documents.*** Get access to a wide range of rulemaking documents, including:

- Texts of proposed regulations
- Agency background documents explaining regulatory actions
- Economic impact analyses
- Meeting agenda and minutes
- Agency guidance documents
- And much more

***Meetings calendar.*** Quickly identify all meetings and public hearings that will address particular regulations. You may also access meeting agendas and minutes.

***Legislative mandates.*** Find out what regulations are being promulgated in response to recent changes in state law.

***Petitions for rulemaking.*** Discover what the public has requested be changed about particular regulations and how an agency has responded to these requests.



## Special features for registered users

***E-mail notification service.*** Sign up for customized notification of new proposed regulations and public meetings.

***Public comment forums.*** Make your voice heard as regulations are developed, and learn what others are saying.

***My Town Hall.*** Create a customized list of meetings and regulatory actions that you wish to track.

***To become a registered user.*** Just click on "Enter Town Hall," then "Fast & easy sign-up" on the blue menu bar.

Helpshapeyourstategovernment  
byparticipatinginrulemaking.

ExploretheTownHall.